**Disability History Month Events Organising Guide**

**Introduction**

Disability History Month takes place every year from mid November to mid December and includes the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. It is a perfect opportunity for UNISON branches and regions to run recruitment stalls showcasing the work UNISON does on equality for disabled workers and to encourage more disabled workers to join our union.

**Getting Started – virtual or in person?**

This year it may not be possible to run an in-person event, so consider running a virtual Disability History month event!

**Running a virtual event**

You could consider running a webinar on a topic of interest to disabled members in your region, where different panellists speak to the attendees, similar to an in-person conference panel. Or for a more interactive session, you may wish to facilitate a discussion, where members and potential members can share their own experiences and ask questions.

Ideas for events include:

* Hold a ‘lunch and learn’ session where people can come along and learn something and have lunch – these can be related to disability history, or any other topic such as reasonable adjustments, Access to Work, standing as a workplace steward, campaigning.
* Put on a relevant video or Film and have a speaker or a discussion afterwards. For example, here are some YouTube videos:
	+ [I’m not your inspiration thank you very much, Stella Young:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8K9Gg164Bsw)
	+ [Yes I can, if…](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjvYZ2jvvp8)
	+ [Social model of disability\*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24KE__OCKMw)
* Host an event such as a quiz

* Work with your regions to produce something like a disability history timeline and hold an event to ‘launch’ it
* Hold a virtual human library where you have volunteers who are willing to be ‘borrowed’ to tell their story of their disability and answer questions by individuals.
* Ask your employer's head of HR or equality lead to speak about disability inclusion
* Ask your UNISON regional disabled members officer to speak about UNISON's disability equality campaigns- list is [here](https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/disabled-members/group-structure-and-contacts/)
* Hold a virtual book club - there are some books suggestions [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/resourcehandler/be1e63aa-82e2-4f95-8c3f-97c0c775edd0/)\*
* Run a disability awareness training session - contact your regional education officer for ideas - list is [here](https://learning.unison.org.uk/regional-education-teams/)

Decide on which platform you are going to use (MS Teams, GoToWebinar etc), choose a topic and invite speakers to address the group. You may consider inviting UNISON activists, officers or an external speaker from a Disabled People’s Organisation, such as Disability Rights UK.

**Ensuring the virtual event is accessible**

Remember to ensure that members’ reasonable adjustments are met for this meeting, so when creating a registration process, ensure that you ask what people need to access your virtual event, including for example, documents and PowerPoint presentations in advance. If BSL interpreters are required for the event, we recommend contacting [Interpreting Matters](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjawa-aks3sAhWNURUIHcB4DOAQFjAAegQICRAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.interpretingmatters.co.uk), and if live captions are needed, contact enquiries@cjccaptioning.co.uk. Ensure you do this as far in advance as possible to ensure availability of the service providers.

**Running an in-person stall**

Identify where and when to run your stall. If your employer is holding a Disability History Month event ask if UNISON can support with a stall. Or your local council may have an event in a library or community centre. If there are no local events then just ask if you can run a stall in the foyer of your building.

For starters you’ll need a table and a couple of chairs. A tablecloth will also make your stall look more attractive. Make sure you bring pens so people can fill in membership forms.

**Resources for your stall or virtual event**

The following resources should be included whether targeted at disabled workers or not:

* Direct Debit and Payroll (DOCAS) membership forms. Item no’s 3866 and 3873.
* UNISON Living Member Benefits leaflet. Item no 0711.
* ‘What is a Trade Union’ leaflet. Item no 3049.

Your branch or regional office should have lots of generic recruitment materials including membership forms or you can order them on the online catalogue.

**Disability Equality merchandise**



UNISON has produced tote bags, pens, T-shirts and keyrings, which are available for branches to order from the Online Catalogue [here](https://shop.unison.site/product-category/disability-equality/).

The following resources are targeted at disabled people and should be used at disability history month events:

* ‘Fighting for Fairness and Equality’ leaflet. Item no 3775.
* Know Your Rights! Recruitment leaflet. Item no 4411
* Mental Health Matters campaign leaflet. Item no 3703.
* [Quick Guide to Reasonable Adjustments](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/04/Quick-Guide-Reasonable-Adjustments-1.docx)
* [Quick Guide to Access to Work](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/08/Quick-Guide-Access-to-Work-July-2020-.docx)

You might also want to print off or link to some of the following:

* [Bargaining guidance on supporting members with long Covid or post-Covid-19 syndrome](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/12/Bargaining-to-support-those-who-have-long-COVID-v6.pdf)
* [Covid 19 and disabled workers – time for a homeworking revolution?](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/07/C19-disability-and-homeworking-report-FINAL.docx)
* [Tackling Hate crimes and hate incidents in the workplace guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/11/UNISON-tackling-hate-a-workplace-issue-Nov2017.pdf)

**Engaging with people**

If running a virtual event, it is essential that participants have a way of interacting with the speakers or panellists.

If running a recruitment stall, the most important part of your recruitment stall is the people staffing it. You will need volunteers who are happy to talk to people and can be enthusiastic about union membership.

Having a petition, for example stop library closures, can help encourage people to talk to you. For disability history month you could focus on services that disabled people use.

Once you’ve got them engaged you can tell them about the importance of trade union membership. There is a helpful flow chart on how to have recruitment conversations at the back of this guide. If they’re already a member encourage them to sign up to the [eBulletin](https://research.unison.org.uk/s3/subscribe?email=701240000006XMn) by ticking the disabled box in [MyUnison](https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/).

**Celebrating Success**

If you do run a virtual event or a stall make sure you let us know! Tweet photos on the day to @UNISONdm and to @unisontheunion so we can spread the news. And email us at disabilityissues@unison.co.uk so we can include photos in our next eBulletin. Good luck!

**UNISON recruitment flow diagram**

**Build Rapport**

* **Ask them to sign up to a petition, campaign action or activity**
* **Ask how they are today, the weather or anything else....**

**Not Eligible for UNISON**

* **Are you in a union?**

**No**

Suggest benefits of union membership

Give information as to sister unions and public campaigns

**Yes**

Give info on public campaigns

**Eligible for UNISON**

* **Are you in a union?**

**Gain Information (are they eligible to join UNISON?)**

* **Where do you work? Do you work in public services? What sort of work do you do?**

**No / not at moment**

**Why is that?**

Seek to handle objections – push benefits. Always leave them with joining info

**No / not any more**

**Do you know what a union can do for you?**

List benefits of union membership

- Representation

- Negotiation

- UNISON plus

**Would you consider joining?**

**Not signed up today**

Leave with sign up form. Reiterate benefits. Take contact details and follow up.

**Signed up today**

Welcome them to UNISON. Tell them what happens next.

**Yes**

Encourage them to sign up today / offer incentive (e.g. free t shirt - or pen! - for people signing up today).

**Yes, not UNISON**

Give information on public campaigns and UNISON’s work in sector and UNISON's focus on disability issues

**Yes, UNISON**

Go into MyUNISON to receive national disability eBulletin

**Have you attended local SOG/national disabled members conference?**